

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 1, 2004. Claims 1 and 3-12 are pending in this application. Claim 2 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-11 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claim 1 is in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Office Action objected to Claim 1, asserting that “a tread” is inferentially recited; Applicant has deleted the “wherein” clause of Claim 1, thus this objection has been obviated as it relates to this point. Moreover, the Office Action objected to Claim 7, asserting that the recitations “upstream side” and “downstream side” are vague; Applicant has amended this claim to recite “the upstream side of the image reading position has a diameter smaller than a diameter of said biasing rotary member on the downstream side of the image reading position.” Lastly, the Office Action objected to Claim 8 as constituting a double recitation of the subject matter recited in Claim 1; Applicant has amended Claim 8 to delete the features already recited in Claim 1, as follows: a sheet-like original reading mechanism which [[has the]] includes conveying rotary member, the biasing rotary members, the pressing means, the reading means; Applicant submits that the objections to the claims have been obviated and therefore Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this objection.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,618,575 (Takida et al.). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from Takida et al. at least for the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is an image reading apparatus that includes a conveying rotary member; and a biasing rotary member, which is in contact with the conveying rotary member, nips a sheet on which an image is formed, together with the conveying rotary member, and conveys the sheet along the conveying rotary member. The apparatus also includes an image sensor which reads the image on the sheet conveyed to an image reading position opposed to a lowermost point of the conveying rotary member, and a pair of pressing plates which are arranged on both sides in an axial direction of the conveying rotary member and presses the sheet against the image reading position.

Among other important features of Claim 1 is that the image reading apparatus (1) nips, by a conveying rotary member and a biasing rotary member in contacting with the conveying rotary member, the sheet on which the image is formed, (2) conveys the sheet along the conveying rotary member, and (3) conveys the sheet to the image reading position opposed to the lowermost point of the conveying rotary member and reads the image. The image reading apparatus having the features included in Claim 1 also includes a pair of pressing plates disposed on both sides, in an axial direction, of the conveying rotary member and presses the sheet against the image reading position, thereby lifting of the original sheet can be prevented to read the image on the sheet. Support in the specification for these features can be found at page 20, line 9, to page 22, line 10.

Takida et al., as understood by Applicant, relates to an automatic document feeder with a conveying roller and an image reader. Takida et al. discusses an original conveying apparatus provided with the pressing piece comprising the Mylar member 25 arranged in a state where the upstream side is fixed and the downstream side is free, the pressing piece being arranged over the upstream side to the downstream side of the reading position X between the large-diameter roller 16 disposed plurally in the axial direction at a predetermined interval and the paper discharge roller 20 (see, e.g., column 6, lines 14-31).

In Takida et al., by providing such a pressing piece, the original sheet to which the reading processing is performed is conveyed while being pressed against the free portion of the pressing piece, thereby the sheet is not flapped up and down, and therefore the image read at the reading position is not distorted (see, e.g., column 8, lines 6-30). However, since the Mylar member 25 is arranged so as to cover the outside peripheral surface of the large-diameter roller 16 at the reading position by the whole width of the original sheet, the original sheet does not come in contact with the large-diameter roller 16 at the reading position.

In contrast, in the image reading apparatus having the features recited in Claim 1, since a pair of the pressing plates is disposed on both sides, in the axial direction, of the conveying rotary member, the original sheet can be conveyed while the original is pressed against the reading position by the conveying rotary member. That is, the image reading apparatus having the features recited in Claim 1 can generate enough of a conveying force by the conveying rotary member even at the reading position, therefore the image on the sheet can be read.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that at least for these reasons, Claim 1 is

patentable over Takida et al.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from Claim 1 discussed above, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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